

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 DRC-01 ACDA-10 PM-03 SAJ-01 TRSE-00

OMB-01 /062 W

----- 081468

P R 11225Z OCT 73

FM USMISSION NATO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2100

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 4874

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR NEGOTIATIONS: BRITISH DRAFT OPENING STATEMENT

VIENNA FOR US MBFR DELEGATION

SUMMARY: AD HOC GROUP PROVISIONALLY APPROVED BRITISH DRAFT
OPENING STATEMENT ON OCTOBER 11 AFTER MAKING LIMITED CHANGES. END
SUMMARY.

BEGIN TEXT:

1. THE SEARCH FOR SECURITY IN EUROPE HAS A LONG AND CHEQUERED
HISTORY. WE MUST ALL BE PROFOUNDLY THANKFUL THAT FOR 28 YEARS
THE CONTINENT HAS SUFFERED NO GENERAL WAR. BUT DURING MOST OF
THAT PERIOD LARGE ARMIES HAVE FACED ONE ANOTHER ON EACH SIDE OF
THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. PEACE HAS BEEN MAINTAINED,
BUT IT HAS BEEN BASED ON A PRECARIOUS STABILITY INTERRUPTED BY
BOUNTS OF TENSION. SO IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THE PERIOD HAS
BEEN MARKED BY A VARIETY OF PROPOSALS, BY ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER,
WHICH HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD WITH THE OBJECT OF PROVIDING AN
ASSURANCE OF GREATER SECURITY FOR ALL THOSE COUNTRIES HERE
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REPRESENTED.

2. THE INITIATIVE IN PROPOSING NEGOTIATIONS FOR MUTUAL AND BALANCED
FORCE REDUCTIONS WAS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENTS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC

TREATY ORGANIZATION AT REYKJAVIK IN JUNE 1968. MY GOVERNMENT WELCOMES THE FACT THAT THIS INITIATIVE HAS AT LAST BORNE FRUIT AND THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WE, AND OUR ALLIES, HAVE ADVOCATED FOR MORE THAN FIVE YEARS ARE NOW TO TAKE PLACE.

3. THIS COULD HARDLY HAVE HAPPENED HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE IMPROVEMENT IN THE CLIMATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS. THE FEDERAL GERMAN GOVERNMENT'S AGREEMENTS WITH COUNTRIES OF THE WARSAW PACT, THE BERLIN AGREEMENT OF 1971, THE SALT AGREEMENTS OF 1972 AND PROGRESS MADE IN THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE, MARKED BY THE OPENING OF THE SECOND STAGE IN GENEVA LAST MONTH, ALL CONSTITUTE EVIDENCE OF THIS IMPROVEMENT. THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO EMBARK ON WHAT MAY PROVE TO BE THE MOST DIFFICULT AND DELICATE OF ALL THE NEGOTIATIONS ATTEMPTED SO FAR. FOR THE TALKS INVOLVE THE VITAL SECURITY INTERESTS OF ALL NATIONS HERE REPRESENTED. THEIR PROGRESS AND OUTCOME CANNOT FAIL TO BE MATTERS OF CONCERN TO OTHERS WHO ARE NOT PARTICIPATING IN THEM.

4. THE SUBJECT IS ONE OF EXTREME COMPLEXITY. BUT THE AIM OF MY GOVERNMENT IS SIMPLY STATED. IT IS TO MAINTAIN SECURITY AT A LOWER LEVEL OF FORCES. WE WANT TO ACHIEVE THIS BY REDUCING THE LEVEL OF FORCES AND ARMAMENTS ON BOTH SIDES IN CENTRAL EUROPE. BUT OUR LABOUR WOULD BE SELF-DEFEATING AND INDEED DANGEROUS IF, AT THE END OF IT ALL, THE MILITARY SITUATION IN EUROPE WAS LESS STABLE THAN IT IS TODAY. SO WE MUST SET OURSELVES, AS A MINIMUM, THE TASK OF ENSURING THAT OUR SECURITY REMAINS UNDIMINISHED. INDEED IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO HOPE THAT, WITH THE LOWERING OF TENSION WHICH SHOULD RESULT FROM THE REDUCTIONS WE AIM TO NEGOTIATE, IT MAY BE INCREASED.

5. WE HAVE NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES WE SHALL HAVE TO OVERCOME. MANY OF THEM STEM FROM THE FACTS OF THE EXISTING MILITARY SITUATION. AT THE OUTSET OF THE NEGOTIATIONS I SHOULD LIKE TO SUMMARIZE THE PRINCIPAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH GOVERN THE BRITISH APPROACH. WE TAKE AS OUR STARTING POINT THE FACT THAT CENTRAL EUROPE IS A ZONE OF CRUCIAL STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE AND CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT THERE IS AT PRESENT A SIGNIFICANT DISPARITY OF FORCES AND ARMAMENTS THERE IN FAVOUR OF THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES. AND THIS DISPARITY IS ENHANCED BY THE STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES WHICH THESE COUNTRIES DERIVE FROM GEOGRAPHY. THIS IS ONE OF THE CENTRAL PROBLEMS WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE TACKLED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

6. SECONDLY, WE SHALL NEED TO FIND MEANS OF ASSURING ONE ANOTHER THAT THE GREATER STABILITY WHICH WE SHALL SEEK WILL NOT BE DISTURBED BY ANY ACTION WHICH IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE AGREEMENT REACHED. WE SHALL NEED TO GUARD AGAINST CIRCUMVENTION OF THE AGREEMENT AND TO PROVIDE FOR VERIFICATION OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION. WITHOUT SUCH ASSURANCE NONE OF US COULD BE CONFIDENT THAT OUR SECURITY REMAINED UNDIMINISHED. BUT WE SHALL SEEK AGREEMENT ON

MEASURES DESIGNED TO DISCOURAGE EITHER SIDE FROM SEEKING UNILATERAL MILITARY ADVANTAGE OVER THE OTHER. WE WOULD REGARD ANY ATTEMPT TO SEEK SUCH ADVANTAGE AS BEING WHOLLY FRUSTRATING TO OUR PURPOSE IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS.

7. THIRDLY, WE SHALL WISH TO ENSURE THAT THE RESULTS OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS DO NOT UNDERMINE THE OBLIGATIONS WE HAVE ASSUMED TOWARDS OUR ALLIES, NOR PREJUDICE - DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY - THE FUTURE EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

8. I HAVE MADE CLEAR THE IMPORTANCE WHICH MY GOVERNMENT ATTACH TO THESE NEGOTIATIONS. HOWEVER DIFFICULT THEY MAY BE, WE BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL THAT THEY SHOULD BE THOROUGH. WE FOR OUR PART ARE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE AS LONG AS IS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE SATISFACTORY RESULTS. A START WAS MADE IN THE EXPLORATORY TALKS WHICH TOOK PLACE IN VIENNA EARLIER IN THE YEAR. AS ONE OF THOSE WHO DID NOT TAKE PART IN THOSE TALKS I SHOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO THOSE WHO DID FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN PREPARING THE WAY FOR THE OPENING OF THESE SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS. AS WE EMBARK ON THEM, WE ARE CONSCIOUS THAT THERE ARE STILL MANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF THE EAST AND THOSE OF THE WEST WHICH REMAIN TO BE RESOLVED. BUT WE BELIEVE THAT ALL OF US HERE SHARE A COMMON INTEREST IN A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME TO THE NEGOTIATIONS. THIS GIVES US CONFIDENCE THAT SUCH AN OUTCOME CAN BE ACHIEVED PROVIDED WE ALL APPROACH OUR TASK CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND IN GOOD FAITH, AND WITH THE CAUTION WHICH IS DUE TO ITS VITAL IMPORTANCE. IT IS THE FIRM DETERMINATION OF MY GOVERNMENT TO DO THIS.

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9. I SHOULD LIKE TO END BY ADDING MY GOVERNMENT'S THANKS TO THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT FOR THEIR GENEROUS HOSPITALITY. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE EFFORTS THEY HAVE MADE TO PROVIDE FOR OUR CONVENIENCE AND TO ENSURE THAT WE HAVE ALL THE FACILITIES WE NEED FOR THIS CONFERENCE, AND ARE DULY GRATEFUL TO THEM.

END TEXT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic DecapTIONing: Z
Capture Date: 02 APR 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 OCT 1973
DecapTION Date: 28 MAY 2004
DecapTION Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973NATO04874
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: NATO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731064/abqcecqnl.tel
Line Count: 152
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: n/a
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01-Aug-2001 by boyleja>; APPROVED <25-Sep-2001 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MBFR NEGOTIATIONS: BRITISH DRAFT OPENING STATEMENT
TAGS: PARM, NATO
To: STATE
SECDEF INFO VIENNA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005